

III. AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Listing of Claims:

1-44. (Cancelled)

45. (Currently amended) A multi-channel system for classifying particles according to one or more characteristics of the particles, said system comprising:

a plurality of flow cytometry units each of which is operable to classify particles in a mixture of particles by interrogating a stream of fluid containing said particles using a beam of electromagnetic radiation, ~~wherein each flow cytometry unit comprises a sensor operable to generate a time-varying output signal indicative of at least one characteristic of the particles in the stream of fluid as the stream of fluid is interrogated by the beam of electromagnetic radiation;~~

said units sharing an integrated platform comprising a common source of electromagnetic radiation and a common processor for receiving and processing information from the units, ~~wherein the common processor is programmed to receive the time-varying output signals from the flow cytometry units substantially continuously and to process the output signals.~~

46. (Cancelled)

47. (Original) The system of claim 45 wherein said particles are cells.

48. (Original) The system of claim 45 wherein said particles are sperm cells.

49. (Previously presented) The system of claim 45 wherein said integrated platform further comprises a common input for controlling operation of the units.

50. (Cancelled)

51. (Currently amended) The system of claim 45 wherein said ~~integrated platform further comprises a common source of electromagnetic radiation, said common source comprising~~ comprises a single laser beam.
52. (Original) The system of claim 51 further comprising a beam splitting system for splitting the single laser beam into multiple beams and directing the multiple beams into optics systems of respective flow cytometry units.
53. (Previously presented) The system of claim 45 wherein said integrated platform further comprises a common housing, said flow cytometry units comprising interchangeable modules removably mounted in the housing.
54. (Original) The system of claim 45 wherein each flow cytometry unit comprises an epi-illumination optics system for interrogating a respective fluid stream.
55. (Previously presented) The system of claim 45 wherein said processor is operable to output an indication of the fluorescence intensity measured by each unit.
56. (Previously presented) The system of claim 45 wherein said processor is operable to output an indication of the rate at which each unit is separating particles.
57. (Previously presented) The system of claim 45 wherein said processor is operable to output an indication of particle staining variations.
58. (Previously presented) The system of claim 45 wherein said processor is operable to output an indication of a decision boundary used by each unit for discriminating between particles.
59. (Original) The system of claim 45 wherein said flow cytometry units are adapted to operate in parallel.

60. (Original) The system of claim 45 wherein said plurality of flow cytometry units are operable to sort the particles.
61. (Currently amended) The system of claim 60 wherein ~~the integrated platform further comprises a common source of electromagnetic radiation, and~~ wherein said plurality of flow cytometry units comprises a jet-in-air droplet sorting flow cytometry unit.
62. (Previously presented) The system of claim 45 wherein the common processor receives and processes said information to permit evaluation of the operation of one unit relative to another unit.
63. (Previously presented) The system of claim 45 wherein the processor is operable to process the output signals in real time.
64. (Previously presented) The system of claim 45 wherein said common processor is operable to send control signals to the flow cytometry units during a sorting process to adjust their operation as a function of said information received by the common processor, and wherein the flow cytometry units are responsive to the control signals.
- 65-80. (Cancelled)
81. (Previously presented) The system of claim 45 wherein said integrated platform further comprises at least one of: (1) a common supply of particles; (2) a common housing; (3) a common input for controlling operation of the units; and (4) a common fluid delivery system for delivering fluid containing said particles to said flow cytometry units.